

DEMOTTE



1876-1976

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DeMotte,
Centennial Booklet
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1976

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



DEMOTTE, INDIANA

1876

1976

FOREWORD

The celebration of one hundred years of existence is a time for joy and thankfulness. The attainment of this goal is a testimony of the goodness of God's hand in dealing with us. Whatever else our centennial may draw our attention to, let not our attention be diverted from that great fact.

The celebration of one hundred years of existence is also a time for remembering. Many events, many people fill the course of one hundred years of history. Who were the people? Where did they come from? What brought them to a specific location? What did they do? How did their actions contribute to the evolvment of a settlement, a village, a town? The questions are assuredly more numerous, but it is these kinds of questions that arise when we celebrate a milestone such as a centennial.

Questions of the above nature and their answers are not simply trivia. They are not simply subjects for the older folk to chat and reminisce about on the street corners. They bear a greater importance than that. Thomas Macavlay wrote, "No past event has any intrinsic importance. The knowledge of it is valuable only as it leads us to form just calculations with respect to the future." Frederick Jackson Turner repeated this same thought: "The aim of history, then, is to know the elements of the present by understanding what came into the present from the past. . ." We notice two basic fundamentals emphasized. The past is important; however, this importance becomes significant only as it helps us to understand and react to the present. So in DeMotte's centennial year we remember what has transpired in its last one hundred years. May what we discover help us to look forward to another one hundred years, God willing.

DEDICATION

We do not have a habit of paying much attention to book dedications. They seem very unmeaningful to us. We very strongly urge to take exception to that habit in this instance. Without the work of one of the members of our community, much of what you will find in the following pages would not be found there. She has searched diligently to discover and to document how our community became what it is today. She has spent time unmeasured in correspondence, in interviewing, in research, in pouring over deeds and abstracts, and in gathering bits of information from far and wide. Without her interest, concern, and determination, the history of our community would not be nearly as complete as it is today. So with great pleasure and pride, we sincerely dedicate this centennial booklet to Mrs. Evelyn Roorda. Thank you, Mrs. Roorda, for your keen interest in the history of our community and for your efforts to discover as much of that history as possible.



Donald and Evelyn Roorda

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the many friends and members of DeMotte who helped to make this Centennial Booklet possible. We thank Mrs. Evelyn Roorda who so willingly made many of her research materials available for our use. We thank Katheryn Van Soest who contributed some material. We thank Carl Arkema who spent many hours pouring over these materials in order to compile, organize, and write much of the copy found in this booklet. We thank all those who have taken the time to provide and donate information and pictures of some sort for our use; of which there were many. We extend our thanks to all those who supported the booklet through their advertisements, as well as those who have given of their time to sell ads.

We wish to thank all those who have given of their time in order to plan, arrange, and carry out the programs which were held on Thursday and Friday evening, as well as the many activities throughout Saturday. Last, but not least, we say thank you to Mr. Jim Coffey who so generously gave his time as chairman of DeMotte's Centennial Celebration.

EARLY SETTLERS INHABIT SWAMPS

The inhabitation of the swamp lands bordering the Kankakee River was a very gradual process. These lands were not officially the possession of the State of Indiana until 1850. At that time, the U.S. government granted the swamp lands to Indiana upon the condition that these lands should be drained and reclaimed and rendered fit for agricultural purposes.

For several years, settlers ignored the swamp lands, opting to settle on higher ground elsewhere. The quest for land by the settlers was not to leave the swamp land uninhabited by humans long. The earliest settlers to come to the immediate area known as DeMotte were the Fairchilds. Elam Fairchild came in 1866. Daniel E. Fairchild came in 1868. At least one of Daniel's children was well-known by many DeMotte residents. This was Charity May Fairchild. She was born in 1882, and died in 1971.

TRUSTEE NOTICE

The undersigned trustee of Keener Township attends to official business at his residence on every Saturday of each week. Persons having township business to transact will be governed accordingly.

Post Office address: DeMotte, Indiana.

A. E. Fairchild,
Trustee

The Tyler's also are distinguished as being early settlers in the area. William H. Tyler especially receives distinction. William came in 1868, too, at the age of 17. William is described as being a person who always took a keen interest in the welfare of his community. DeMotte was not yet in existence when Mr. Tyler came to Keener Township. Nevertheless, he was a faithful friend and loyal supporter of the growing village from its conception. For 64 years Tyler served his community, once as a township trustee always as an interested and helping neighbor. Mr. Tyler could well be described as a father of his community, for he was for many years the oldest resident in the township. Tyler died in 1932.



Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Tyler and son Bardon



Daniel E. Fairchild

Born June 22, 1846

Died March 18, 1917

William H. Tyler

Born 1851

Died 1932



A TOWN GROWS

A town receives its conception from people. It can probably be said that people are the primary ingredient of a town. On the other hand, a town with people only living there lacks something that makes a town really a town. Those people have to be doing things. They have to be engaged in activities that will attract people from the outside. Thus, we often think in terms of stores and businesses, as being the main ingredient of towns.

The first store in Little Village (DeMotte) was a general store. Today general stores generally exist only as memories of a bygone era. Fifty and seventy-five years ago, they were the K-Marts of today plus. DeMotte's first general store was established by Seth Bentley in 1876. Mr. Bentley purchased land from Austin Way. This land was bordered on the south by the right-of-way of the present railroad. Mr. Bentley later turned over the operation of his store to Charles O. Spencer, most likely about the time when he assumed the duties of postmaster.

The establishment of Mr. Bentley's store is a significant event in our history. According to present officials, Bentley's store in 1876 marked the beginning of the history of a town by the name of DeMotte. Actually this was not the first time the name DeMotte was officially used to designate this northern Indiana settlement. Records in the U.S. Land Office in Indianapolis show the name DeMotte being officially used in the transaction of deeds pertaining to land already in 1871. Even that official usage is preceded by an earlier date. A map of Jasper County, bearing the heading of Modesai F. Chilcote, Attorney at Law and Notary Public at Rensselaer, Indiana, and drawn by L. A. Bostwick, dated 1868, also bears the name of DeMotte. In contrast to these early datings, some local residents of the community place the naming of the community as DeMotte as late as 1882-1883. Museum curators, however, confirm that at least the date of 1871, as recorded in the U.S. Land Office, be recognized as one of the earliest official usages of DeMotte as the name of the community.

The origin of the name DeMotte is much easier to document. It is an interesting fact, one that demands some recognition I think, that many of those who were active in the origin of our community were Civil War veterans. It was not unnatural then that these people should choose a Civil War figure as their town's namesake. Such a person was Colonel Mark L. DeMotte. A short biography of Col. DeMotte is found in another place.

From the information that has been discovered, it seems that the decade of the 1880's was when the town of DeMotte experienced a real measure of growth. Several developments contributed to this expansion. Early in the 1800's, land was donated or sold by the Fairchilds to be used specifically for the purpose of locating a town. This land was plotted and those plots which were sold ranged in price from \$5 to \$10!

Speculation in the early 1880's concerning a railroad passing near the village drew much interest among its residents. Interest became so keen that three or four villagers contributed land for the railroad right of way. It was thus that the Three I railroad became one of the earliest links between DeMotte and the outside world in 1882-1883. The Indiana-Illinois-Iowa track connected DeMotte to San Pierre to the east and Momence to the west. Rail transportation made several new commercial adventures feasible. One such adventure was the cutting and bailing of swamp grass. Such grass could be sold in Chicago for \$8 a ton.

Another connection with the outside world was realized in 1882. This was the year DeMotte received its first post office. Seth Bentley



De Motte Jasper Incl.
1883 Recorded Dec 15-1884

II + IRR

II + IRR		Bandy Street Depot		
140'	Block 4	140'	Block 3	105'
14	1	759 ft	14	1
13	2		13	2
12	3		12	3
11	4		11	4
10	5		10	5
9	6		9	6
8	7		8	7
Walnut Street			Walnut Street	
Block 5			Block 6	
12	1		12	1
11	2		11	2
10	3		10	3
9	4		9	4
8	5		8	5
7	6		7	6
Tyler Street		759 ft approx	Tyler Street	

Recorder
Thomas G. Anthony

R. D. Gregg
Civil Engineer
100 ft to 1 inch

served as the first Post Master, evidently giving up his duties at his general store or doing so soon after. One wonders what Bentley's remuneration was for his tasks, considering that postage was a whopping 2c!

Commercial developments continued to occur. A saloon appeared near the Three I railroad. A hotel, the Trovell Hotel, came into being. During the later 1800's and early 1900's a blacksmith shop operated by Bill Cheever, a store operated by Herman Oosting, Konovsky's lumberyard, an ice house, and a creamery all took their place in DeMotte's commercial history. In 1900 the first depot station came into existence. The station was operated by Charles Curtin, who held that position for forty-five years.



By 1890, DeMotte's population was recorded as being 492. By 1910, that number had grown to 711. Evidently such numbers warranted the existence of a cemetery. The DeMotte Cemetery was plotted in 1916. Another fact that struck my fancy was that John Terborg operated a peanut shop in downtown DeMotte in the early 1900's. I wonder what a snack of peanuts might cost at that time. My nickel in the peanut machine today yields far less than what a penny did when I was a small boy.



**Main Street
looking south**

Before 1907

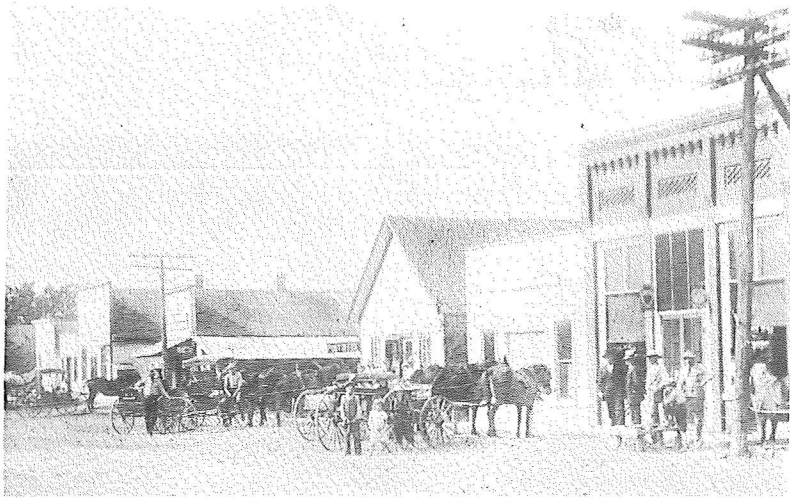


1906

DEMOTTE

"ENTIRE SCHOOL
OF 1906"

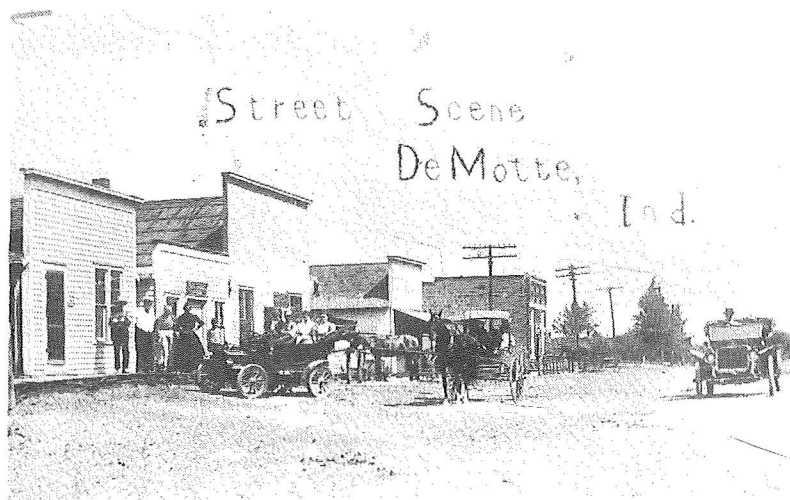




Before 1913



About 1933



Before 1911



About 1933



Before 1911



Looking North Down Main Street



CIVIL WAR VETERAN BECOMES TOWN'S NAMESAKE

It was previously stated that this booklet would include a biography of the man for whom DeMotte is named. The following is such. Do not be surprised by how little mention is made of this man's presence in the town itself. Little mention can be made of it because Colonel DeMotte actually spent a very limited amount of time in the town named after him. Much of the information concerning Mr. DeMotte in this article is based on facts supplied by a Judge Norton of Valparaiso. These were found in an article written June 6, 1930.

Mark L. DeMotte was born to the Rev. Daniel DeMotte and his wife December 28, 1832. The birth occurred near Rockville, Indiana. From here, the Rev. DeMotte carried on his circuit riding activities.

Mark DeMotte came to the northern Indiana area in 1855. He established a law practice in Valparaiso. In 1856 he became a prosecuting attorney for a six-county region. Mr. DeMotte's career in law was interrupted by the advent of the Civil War in 1861. In 1862, DeMotte was commissioned to serve in that war as a Captain.

DeMotte did not return to Indiana again until 1877. As before, Valparaiso became his place of residence, and his attention was devoted to law. Evidently, Mr. DeMotte's devotion to law was not small in measure. In 1879, this devotion led to the founding of the department of law which is now part of the Valparaiso University.

The latter years of DeMotte's life included a variety of activities. He continued to expend much effort to expanding the law department at the University. Mr. DeMotte tried his hand at being a political candidate. In 1880 he was elected to Congress, only to be defeated in 1882. DeMotte participated in state politics, too, as a State Senator. He also served as a Post Master at Valparaiso until 1894. Mark L. DeMotte died September 23, 1908.



Mark L. DeMotte

Founder and Dean of School
of Law, Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, Ind.

"He who has never yet stooped down into the gutter and
lifted up a fellow human being, has not tasted
the cream of living."

AREA ATTRACTS NEW SETTLERS

Quite a number of the early settlers of the DeMotte community were of German and Dutch descent. Some of these settlers, especially the Dutch, owed their opportunity to settle in this area to the Otis Brothers. Charles and Lucius Otis were of Chicago. Together they purchased hundreds of acres of lands to the south of DeMotte. These men then sponsored quite a large number of settlers, especially Dutch, to come to this area and helped them to get settled on the land they had purchased.

These settlers sharecropped the land with the Otis brothers. Their initial experience on the

Otis ranches helped them to later start their own farms. Included among these settlers in the DeMotte area were the Walstra's, the Peterson's, the Sipkema's, the Roorda's, Ralph Boezman Sr., the Nannenga's, the Kammenga's, Dan Sipkema, Andrew Sytsma, and Jake Hoffman. These are only a few of those who worked on the Otis farms. Many more individuals and families could be named.

It was mentioned previously that of the new settlers that made their way to the DeMotte area, a considerable number were of Dutch descent. The early Dutch were a stoutly religious people. It is not surprising, then, that the initiation of worship services soon followed their arrival. It seems, however, that the Dutch were not the first to do so. According to Mr. Jay Spencer, the earliest attempt to establish a church in DeMotte involved some controversy. The debate centered around what denomination the church would be. Apparently the church originated as somewhat of an interdenominational church. It was then known as the Pioneer Church. Some people wanted it to be Presbyterian, while others favored a Free Methodist church. In 1962 this church was sold to the Church of the Nazarenes.



Dutch worship services are recorded as having been held as early as 1892. Worship services were held in the Tyler School located north of DeMotte. Cornelius Dertien and Jacob Haan led the worship services and read sermons to the worshippers. In the very same year, the local Methodist Church opened its doors to this new worshipping group for morning worship in a school near Thayer.

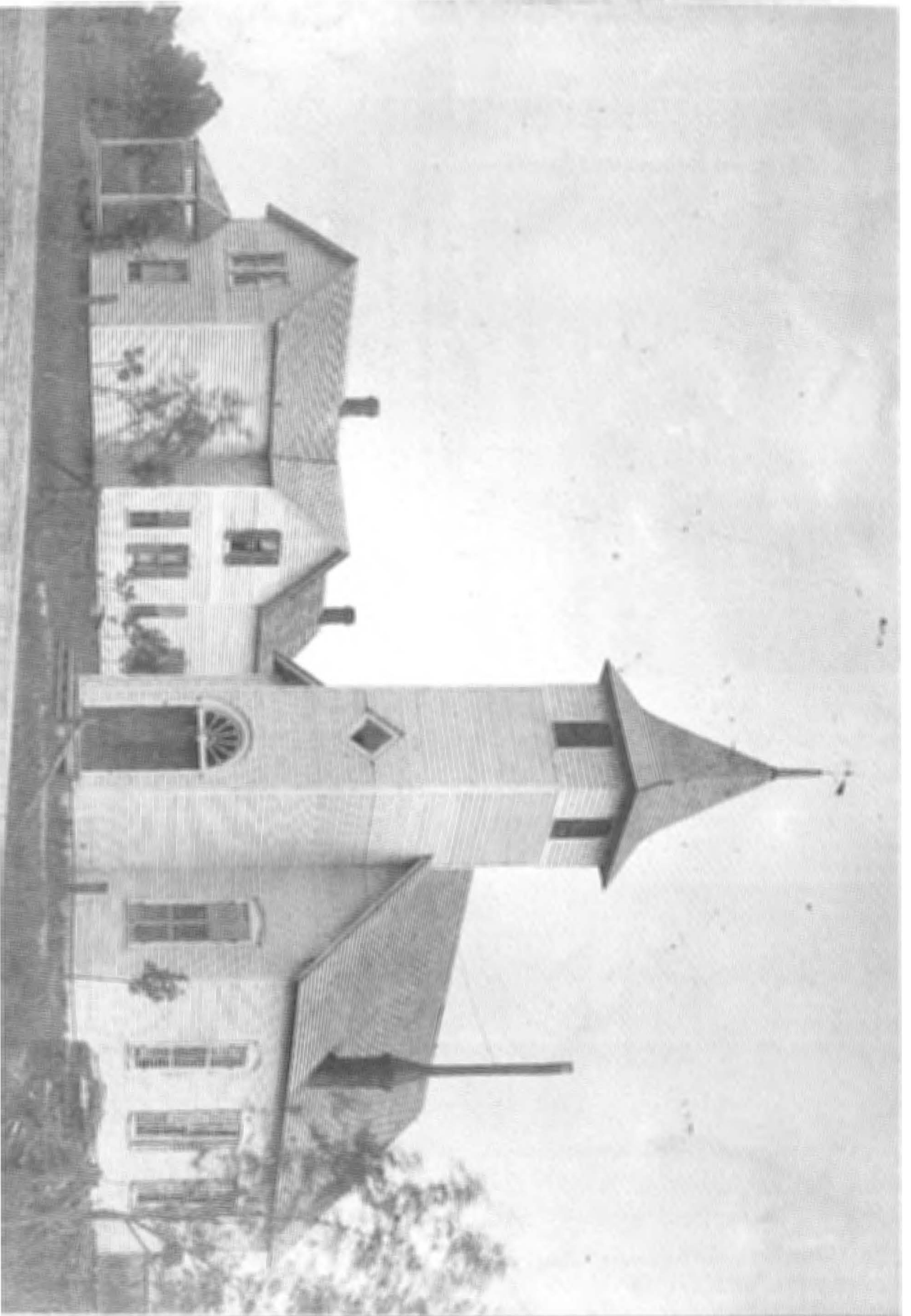
Formal organization of this group as the First Reformed Church occurred on January 25, 1893. Eleven families constituted the first membership which added up to 19 members. Rev. T. M. Vanden Bosch became the first pastor and served from 1897-1902. Jacob Groet presented the church with an acre of land at Dutch Corners. In 1900, the first church building was erected and the first church service was held on July 8, 1900. A parsonage was built adjacent to the church in 1900, also.

Agitation for more use of the English language in the worship services prompted organization of the American Reformed Church in 1920.

In 1931 several members of the First Reformed Church asked to be transferred and were later organized as the Christian Reformed Church of DeMotte, Indiana.

Today the town of DeMotte claims quite a large number of churches representing several denominations. There are two Christian Reformed churches, two Reformed churches, a Methodist church, a Nazarene church, a Roman Catholic church, a Community Bible church, a Church of Christ church, a Lutheran church, a United Pentacostal church, and a Baptist church.





First Reformed Church — Shortly After 1900

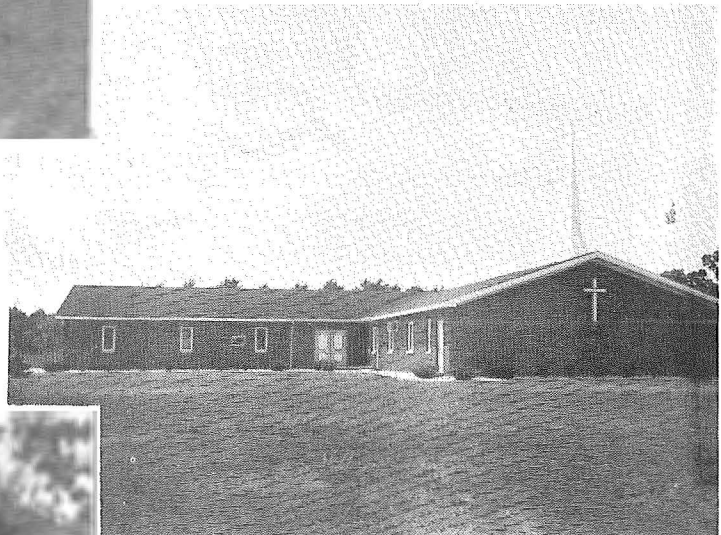
1976 — DE MOTTE CHURCHES ~

American Reformed Church →



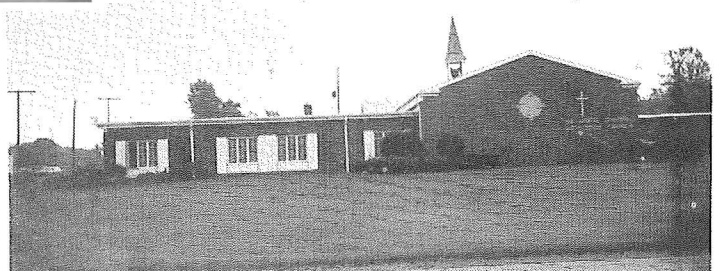
← Bethel Christian Reformed Church

Community Bible Church →



← DeMotte Nazarene Church

DeMotte United Methodist Church →



~ DEMOTTE CHURCHES ~ 1976



← *Faith Lutheran Church*



First Christian Reformed Church →



← *First Reformed Church*

St. Cecelia Catholic Church →



LOCAL MAN RECALLS EARLY HISTORY

(The following are excerpts taken from an article written by H. Earl Schwanke in 1958. Mr. Schwanke notes some of the progression of the history of the DeMotte area.)

"At the end of the Civil War, settlers began to come into this locality by way of an Indian Trail which ran the length of Dividing Ridge in Illinois. This trail was widened for covered wagons and sleds. This became a very important road and was later known as the San Pierre to Momence Trail.

The immigrants who began to come here were people of many different nationalities, but most of them were German. They came to a wilderness. There were no towns, roads, railroads, nor markets except for furs.

With the building of the railroad at San Pierre, a market was established. One more chance for the settlers to make money had developed. Soon it was not uncommon to see a sled loaded with deer, ducks, geese, or prairie chicken moving to market. Some of the early day market hunters were Obenchains, the Fairchilds, the Grangers, Bill Remer, George Casey, John Kosky, "Buckskin" Hank Sparling, Frank Mosier, Sr., and others.

The only communication to the outside world at first was by a pony express over the San Pierre Trail from Momence. Frank Hart, Sr., then a mere boy, rode the Pony Express through the wilderness. Later, a non-profitable post office was maintained on the Gleason Farm.

In or around 1880 there was talk of a railroad coming through from east to west. Being good citizens, the Fairchilds, the Broadberries, the Tylers, Seth Bentley, and Alex McDonald got behind this movement and donated the right of way. We were soon favored with a railroad. With the coming of a railroad, a town was needed. Many lots were donated or sold at \$5.00 or \$10.00 each by Alex McDonald and Dan Fairchild, Sr. In a surprisingly short time a town sprung up, a town without a name. As many of the men in this locality were Civil War veterans, they decided the town should be called DeMotte, in honor of Colonel Mark L. DeMotte.

With the coming of railroad, two new markets were available; a market for prairie hay to feed the teamsters horses in Chicago and a market for firewood, as there were not many coal mines at this time. Both the above-mentioned items could be had for the cutting and hauling.

After the coming of the railroad, many notable people visited this locality. Among them were Theodore Roosevelt, General Lew Wallace, princes, dukes, congressmen, and millionaires. Many of them came to hunt and fish in the Grand Marsh of the Kankakee."

DEMOTTE BOASTS PROMINENT NATIONAL CITIZEN

Not many DeMotte citizens can claim national prominence. Several people of national prominence have come to the DeMotte area, as Mr. Schwanke's article denotes. DeMotte hasn't sent many persons the other way, however. The one outstanding exception to that can be found in the person of Charles A. Halleck.

Charles Halleck was born in DeMotte on August 22, 1900. After a lengthy educational experience, Mr. Halleck was admitted to the Indiana bar in 1924. He took up practice in Rensselaer, where he also served the Thirtieth Judicial Circuit Court five terms.

Mr. Halleck is most remembered for his political career. Charles was elected as a member of the U.S. Congress for 16 terms, serving from the 74th to 90th sessions. Halleck filled the position of Majority Leader of the House of Representatives in its 80th and 83rd sessions. In the 86th to 88th sessions of Congress, Mr. Halleck was Minority Leader.

In 1971 Mr. Halleck was officially recognized by the



citizens of DeMotte and many, many other friends. DeMotte's Town and Farm Day, June 26, 1971 honored Mr. Halleck as Grand Marshall and Guest of Honor. The day was formally proclaimed Charlie Halleck Day by Governor Edgar Whitcomb. Mr. Halleck now resides in Rensselaer, Indiana.

STATE OF INDIANA

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
INDIANAPOLIS

PROCLAMATION

Executive Order

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS MAY COME, GREETING:

WHEREAS, Charles A. Halleck, former Congressman from Indiana and outstanding political figure, who served as both Majority and Minority Leader in the U.S. House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, he has served our nation not only with political courage, but with a high order of selflessness, as well as being a dynamic and effective leader; and

WHEREAS, he has been a foremost patriot and because of his rare abilities and character, the chronicle of his rise to high levels of political responsibility cannot fail to guide all who aspire to achieve his accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, he has, during his lengthy career, called forth both the eulogies and the respect of his fellow Congressmen, as well as fellow Hoosiers; and

WHEREAS, he has championed legislative battles for such measures as the Taft-Hartley Bill, the Landrum-Griffin Law and the 1964 Civil Rights Act; and

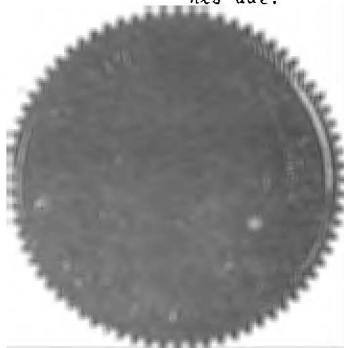
WHEREAS, the Town of DeMotte, Indiana, the birthplace of Charles A. Halleck, will show appreciation and gratitude by honoring him on June 26, 1971; and

WHEREAS, the Town of DeMotte is holding its Second Annual Town & Farm Day, and Charles A. Halleck will be Grand Marshall and Guest of Honor at our parade:

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Edgar D. Whitcomb, Governor of the State of Indiana, do hereby proclaim June 26, 1971, as

CHARLIE HALLECK DAY

throughout the sovereign State of Indiana, and urge his countrymen to extend him the honor and respect that is his due.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the great seal of the State of Indiana, at the Capitol, in the city of Indianapolis, this 7th day of June 1971.

BY THE GOVERNOR

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Edgar D. Whitcomb". Below the signature is a printed name and title.

EDGAR D. WHITCOMB
GOVERNOR OF INDIANA

ALL ABOUT 1935



DISASTER STRIKES

The growth of the town of DeMotte was fairly steady. There were no rapid sizable bursts of growth in early DeMotte. But from the time of the Fairchilds in 1868 and the first store in 1876, DeMotte had grown family by family and store by store.

In 1936 this growth and development appeared on the verge of being entirely destroyed. This was the year of DeMotte's great fire. The Kankakee Valley Post of April 3, 1969, contained an article recalling that event:

"There were conflicting reports as to the origin of the fire, but it is pretty generally agreed that a trash fire in proximity to the lumber warehouse, Mary's Restaurant, and the Wm. Swart Co. Store gave the blaze its inception.



The blaze was fanned by a high wind and quickly got beyond control. It swept rapidly southward from the warehouse to envelop the Swart building and Mary's Restaurant. From there, it moved steadily and quickly to other buildings on the west side of the street. Embers were picked up by the northwest wind and spewed on buildings on the east side of the street where several buildings gradually caught on fire.

Alarms were sent to Hebron, Crown Point, Lowell, Schneider, and Rensselaer. The Hebron



truck was the first to arrive and was followed shortly by trucks from Crown Point and Lowell. Schneider, Wheatfield, and Rensselaer firemen also responded and lent valuable assistance in checking the blaze which at four-thirty p.m. appeared likely to destroy every business institution in the village as well as numerous homes.

Handicapped because of the town's lack of water works, the firemen had to resort to chemicals and tanks of water transported from the Sekema ditch a half mile west of the burning town. But they fought doggedly on against a blaze that gave every evidence of being unstoppable. So dense and stinging were the black clouds of smoke and so intense the heat that it seemed impossible to save any of the buildings, but cooperation and determination finally halted the blaze.

Peculiarly, it was checked at a frame building, the John Terborg Coffee Shop, which apparently had been destined for quick destruction. Two streams playing on two different sides of the building turned back the fire to spare the few remaining buildings on this side of the street. In the meantime, embers had been whipped across the street to Ruth's Bakery, the Bonstra Shoe Shop, and the John Bunning residence. It was not long before they, too, were a mass of flames. Lack of water and equipment were proving a terrible handicap to the firemen who had concentrated their efforts toward checking the heavy blaze in mid-block on the west side.

All was confusion and the heat and smoke screen made the fighting of the blaze both a dangerous and haphazard battle. The wonder is that the firemen were so successful in their determined fight against a blaze that apparently was intent on wiping out the entire business section and many homes".

The article gives various other facts about the fire. It describes the refugee-like appearance of the streets as stores and homes were emptied of their contents. Tribute is given to the success of bucket brigades which had to be used to save a number of homes. The damage caused by the fire was estimated to be between \$100,000 and \$200,000. Also emphasized is

the fact that not one serious injury was sustained as a result of the fire.

The following paragraph concludes the article:

"DeMotte has not been beaten by the devastating blaze. That was evident last night by statements of leading citizens. Grimly determined are they that their town will build anew. Their progressive, determined spirit did not die with yesterday's tragedy."

As we look back on one hundred years of existence, those words stand as a testimonial to those pioneers who first came to our town. Even more importantly, however, these words stand as a mandate towards the people of DeMotte who contemplate another year, another 10 years, another one hundred years of existence. May their progressive, determined spirit never die.



"Before the Fire"



"After the Fire"

**DE MOTTE
CENTENNIAL**

1876 ~ 1976

**CELEBRATION
PROGRAM**

AUGUST 12 ~ 13 ~ 14

— Centennial Program —

Thursday, August 12 — 8:00 P.M.

Centennial Song Fest

DeMotte Elementary School Gymnasium

Presenting

Mr. Roger Triemstra - Speaker and Master of Ceremonies

Mr. Dick Jolink - Song Leader

American Reformed Church Choir

DeMotte Christian School Choir

DeMotte Methodist Church Choir

His Flock Singing Group

Dialogue On History of DeMotte

Friday, August 13 — 8:00 P.M.

Centennial Variety Show

DeMotte Elementary School Gymnasium

Presenting

Mr. Len Ellis - Master of Ceremonies

TAP DANCE ACT

Denise Brown - Ronda Brown - Lisa Schultz

SOLOIST - Beverly Kuipers

VOCAL DUET - Carol Musch - Cathy Musch

BLUE GRASS MUSIC

Robert Cron - Ben Oliver

IMPRESSIONIST - Mike Prichard

PIANO SOLO - Randy Frieling

ACROBATICS - Jody Wiers

YANKEE - DUTCH READING

Richard Wunderink

BARBER SHOP QUARTET SINGING

By The Ice Cream Socials

Saturday, August 14 — 10:00 A.M.

Parade

On Halleck Street

Beginning At Division Road and Going South To Fifteen Street

Review Stand - Master of Ceremonies - Walter Roorda

Activities

DeMotte Elementary School Grounds

On Platform

12:00 - Jasper County Fife and Drum Corp.

12:30 - Presentation of Awards For Parade

Mr. Chuck DelVecchio - Parade Chairman

Mr. Walter Roorda - Master of Ceremonies

Mr. John Michaels

1:00 - Costume Contest

1:30 - Beard Contest

2:00 - Klompen Dancers

2:30 - Award To Oldest Person Present

Award To Youngest Person Present

3:00 - Senior Citizens Dancing

3:30 - Pie Eating Contest [Ages 11-12]

3:45 - Pie Eating Contest [Ages 13 Years thru Adults]

4:30 - Dialogue On History of DeMotte

5:00 - Square Dancing For All By "Hey" Lofters On Parking Lot

Children's Corner

1:30 - Penny Scramble

[Pre-School]

2:00 - Sack Races

[Ages 5-6]

2:30 - Watermelon Eating Contest

[Ages 7-8]

3:00 - Watermelon Pit Spitting Contest

[Ages 9-10]

All Day — 2nd Annual Arts and Crafts Festival

THANK YOU

FOR

ATTENDING

OUR

CENTENNIAL

CELEBRATION

—THE COMMITTEE



"ENTIRE SCHOOL 1917"



"A CLASS OF 1917"

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS NOT IGNORED IN DEMOTTE

Schools were not quite so popular in earlier history as they are today. But then the residents of the county were not quite as concerned with taxes and teachers and salaries either. In 1853, there were only eight schools in all of Jasper and Newton Counties combined. One of these schools was the Corn School, District #1 of Keener Township, located three miles west of DeMotte. A second school finally appeared in 1867. Tyler School, District #2, was built one mile east of DeMotte. These two schools were to serve the educational needs of the area until 1890. At that time, a two-room frame building was erected.

The beginning of the present elementary building in DeMotte occurred in 1914. It was occupied by a staff of three teachers. A small freshman class was started. In 1918 the high school graduated its first class. It is interesting to note that all three graduates were girls.

A consolidation of district schools in Keener Township took place in 1919. This marked the birth of the DeMotte Public School. An enrollment of about three hundred students was recorded. This number of students required an expansion of the physical plant. Additional construction took place in 1933 and in 1936. Much of the present building as it stands was the result of efforts begun in 1955.

In February, 1971, the latest development in the educational aspect of the community's development began to serve the community. On this date 950 pupils occupied the new Kankakee Valley High School. Construction of this facility began in June, 1969 under the supervision of Van Keppel Construction Company.

The school presently houses both the senior high school and the junior high school. However, the school is already being used beyond capacity. Annual increasing enrollments have made it necessary for the school to consider adding a middle school to the complex located east of DeMotte on state highway 10.

In addition to the public school system in DeMotte, the community is also served by the DeMotte Christian School. DeMotte Christian School was conceived in 1947. It is a private school, supported and funded primarily by the parents whose children attend the school. DeMotte Christian, too, has benefited from the burgeoning population of the surrounding area. Today the enrollment is over 300 and the staff numbers 15.



ORGANIZATIONS

Throughout the years of DeMotte's growth, there have been various clubs and groups organized. Some have continued to grow and to function until the present time. Others, because of various reasons have disbanded and no longer exist.

The first organization of record was a Home Economics Club formed in 1913. This club no longer seems to be in existence, although we do have two Home Economics Clubs in DeMotte. One was begun in the early 1930's and the other around 1965.

In 1941, the DeMotte Parent Teachers Association (PTA) was organized on March 31. The membership then was 85, and the yearly dues were 25c. The first president of this organization was

Mrs. Ruth Rowen. This organization is still active, now under the name of Parent Teachers Organization (PTO).

On April 13, 1942, the DeMotte PTA decided to sponsor the Boy Scout Troop #53. This troop has been active ever since and is certainly an asset to the community.

The DeMotte American Legion Post 440 officially received its charter and was organized on December 17, 1946, but did not receive their charter until May 28, 1947.

In 1947 a Lions Club was organized. For the next several years we find very few records of any new organizations coming into existence.

The DeMotte Chamber of Commerce came into being in 1971. This organization was destined to be short lived however. Because of lack of interest, it was disbanded on December 12, 1974.

Some of the more recent and presently active organizations are: The DeMotte Jaycees, organized on August 14, 1972, and the DeMotte Keenagers, formed October 3, 1972. The town of DeMotte owes much to the various organizations throughout the years for their efforts in providing entertainment and activities to the community.

ACTIVITIES

Very soon after the American Legion was organized, they began to hold yearly festivals called Homecomings, in honor of those young men returning home after the Second World War. The first of these Homecoming festivals was held in 1946. They continued these much anticipated festivals for twelve years, with the last one being held in 1958. Many people enjoyed the carnival atmosphere brought to town by these Homecomings.

For many years there was various entertainment and activities from time to time, but nothing of a continuing nature until 1970 when the Chamber of Commerce began to hold the Farm and Town Festivals. There were three of these celebrations held with the attendance at the last one in 1972 being estimated at 8000 people. These Farm and Town days were designed to emphasize some of the unique products and industries of the DeMotte area.

In 1975, the "Friends of the Library" held the first Arts and Crafts Festival. This proved to be a huge success and is being held once again this year. The Centennial Celebration is being held in conjunction with this years Arts and Crafts Festival on August 14.

DEMOTTE INCORPORATED

The incorporation of the town of DeMotte took place through the efforts of a group of DeMotte Businessmen headed by Mr. Walter Roorda, and Mr. Gerritt Van Keppel in 1965. The first election of town board members was held on Monday, October 11 of the same year. That first town election led to a Republican sweep of all five seats on the town board, as well as the office of clerk-treasurer. Elected to that first board were; Ward 1, Ernest Eenigenburg; Ward 2, James Coffey; Ward 3, Donald Fieldhouse; Ward 4, Charles Abbring, Sr.; Ward 5, Art Lagaveen, Jr.; and Clerk-Treasurer, Harry Stockman.

On Thursday, October 21, 1965, Jack Stellingwerf, DeMotte Justice of the Peace, performed the installation of the newly elected town officials. Following the installations, Harry Stockman announced he had received the first letter addressed to the DeMotte City Hall. The letter, from Tele-Electron, Inc. wished to install an antenna 5.1 miles east-northeast of Cheever's Airport. No action, except possibly to inform the public, will be taken since the antenna is to be installed outside the corporate limits of DeMotte.

The first meeting of the new board was held on October 26, 1965, with all members present. Mr. Art Lagaveen was elected as board president. This was also to be the last meeting of this board for sixteen months.

Two weeks later a court injunction was levied against the incorporation thereby making it null and void. This action was brought about by a group of citizens who were opposed to the incorporation of the town. After a lengthy court battle, the action was brought before the Indiana

General Assembly in the form of Bill 1766. On March 11, 1967, this bill came up for action on the floor of the General Assembly and after much discussion, Bill 1766 was passed, thereby officially, once again, incorporating the town of DeMotte.

On March 14, 1967, the previously elected town board met for the second time in their history. Progress has been smooth and steady since that time. Due to the action of the town board, we have a

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1965

DeMotte Officials Installed



Sitting (left to right) Don Fieldhouse, Harry Stockman and Charles Abbring.
Standing (left to right) Art Lageveen, James Coffey and Ernie Eenigenburg.

full time police force. We have an active park board, working on the development of two town parks. Many ordinances have been passed, thereby causing our town to grow in an orderly fashion.

Most recently, all the town streets have been renamed and numbered. Now the town board is engaged in the development and installation of a sewer system. The running of a town is no small job, and I think we should give a note of thanks to the present town board consisting of Dr. Roy Kingma, president, Jack Stellingwerf, Melvin Toppen Jr., John Fase, and John Marsh, with Mrs. Jeanette Roorda as Clerk-Treasurer; as well as all those men and women who have so ably served their town in between that first board and the present.

FURTHER DEVELOPEMENT

Following the fire in 1936, the citizens of DeMotte began the rebuilding of the town with the same "progressive, determined spirit," that had been evident in the building of DeMotte throughout the years. The buildings which had been destroyed were rebuilt in a very short time, and the businesses were back in operation.

Following this rebuilding of DeMotte, the growth continued at a slow but steady pace. Not much was seen in the realm of new business establishments for several years. The main business section continued to develop around the original part of town, near the railroad tracks.

The turning point in the growth of DeMotte seemed to be in 1955, the year Mr. Gerritt Van Keppel purchased a tract of land one mile north of the existing business district. On this piece of land was built the offices and warehouse for Van Keppel Construction Company. Mr. Van Keppel, through his company, was instrumental in the developement of a very large section of the north part of town through the developement of the Hillside Shopping Center and Prospect Hill Sub-division, where he built many homes.

The first building erected in this northern section, after the Van Keppel Construction Company office, was the Hillside Bowling Lanes. This was constructed in 1959 and opened for business in 1960 under the able direction of Mr. Nick Tillger.

In 1960, the main complex of the Hillside Shopping Center was begun with the construction of the building that was to house Beckman's Super Market, owned and operated, then, by Mr. Leo Beckman. The developement of this shopping center progressed steadily, year by year, for the next twelve years, with the last of the present facilities having been built in 1972. This complex has grown over these years to the point of housing stores, providing groceries, clothing, hardware, Insurance service, sporting goods, jewelry, grooming service, radios and televisions, furniture, food service, and even manufacturing.

During this same period of time, there have been building of business establishments in other areas of town. Mistfers John and George Konovsky have contributed to the growth of the area between the Hillside Shopping Center and the original section of town by providing land and buildings for other businesses. There have been others, too numerous to mention, who have built along the main highway, both to the north and to the east, within this period of growth since 1955.

From the point of the opening of the Seth Bently General Store to the present time, DeMotte has grown from that one location to a string of business establishments that transcends a two mile span along the main street. In 1876, Mr. Bently's store provided all the services and products that were available in DeMotte. Today, almost every service or product which you could possibly think of is available from the many businesses in DeMotte. It is estimated that we have in town, or in the immediate proximity, over 125 independent businesses to serve DeMotte's growing populace.

POPULATION GROWTH

The building growth has not been restricted only to business establishments. The growth in population has also kept pace, particularly in the last ten years. The factor that brought people to our area in larger numbers was the highway, Interstate 65. This expressway opened in 1966 as a direct route from Gary to Indianapolis. This roadway lies four miles to the west of DeMotte. Why did it bring people? It provides a fast easy way for them to commute to occupations in the metropolitan areas to the north of us.

In 1955, when Van Keppel Construction Company was established, the Prospect Hill Sub-division was also begun. This was only the first of many more to follow in order to provide housing for the incoming populace that DeMotte was receiving. Started since that time, and still growing, are Eastview Sub-division, Rolling Meadows Sub-division, Hollandale Sub-division, and Peterson's Sub-division within the town limits of DeMotte. These do not include the many developements which lie outside the town limits.

The number of residents of DeMotte has grown from the 711 recorded in 1910 to a total of 1697 at the time of the 1970 census. This number, too, only reflects those who live within the established borders of incorporated DeMotte, which is a small percentage of the people who participate in the affairs and activities of the town of DeMotte.

PRODUCTIVITY

Every community has some product, service, or industry that is distinct to that particular community, and DeMotte has been no exception over the years. The economy of DeMotte in the early years of development was built around agriculture. As was pointed out in the earlier history, the harvesting and marketing of swamp grass became a prosperous business after the railroad came to DeMotte.

Another agricultural product that made quite a name for itself was the commercial growing of pickles. There was a time when there were pickle factories, as they were called, in every berg in the area. These were actually only collection stations where the pickles were brought by the grower. At these pickle factories, the pickles were put into large vats, thereby beginning the canning process. These pickle factories appeared in the early 1920's in DeMotte, Kersey, Kniman, Roselawn, Fair Oaks, and other area towns, representing such companies as Squire Dingy and Ma Brown pickles.

The farmer was always looking for a crop that would produce a good income per acre and at the same time, one that would produce a cash income in the spring of the year. These were some of the reasons that Mr. John Kooy and Mr. Ed DeVries began to raise asparagus. In the year 1925, they planted asparagus seed in the hopes that this would be the answer to their problems of cash flow.

They found that the plants grew well on DeMotte's sandy soil and produced a good quality asparagus. However, the good crop brought forth another problem, that of what to do with the product. This was solved when first a Mr. White and a short time later Mr. Fred Hoffman transported the asparagus crop to Chicago, to sell on the South Water Street produce market.

At this time, the asparagus was put into bunches and sold wholesale for distribution directly into the grocery stores. In early 1950's, canning companies came into the area and started buying the crop of asparagus in bulk, thereby eliminating the bunching process, and allowing many farmers to grow and harvest larger acreage of asparagus.

The growing of asparagus had a double effect on the economy of DeMotte. It not only provided the farmer with good income per acre, but also provided jobs and thereby income for the young people of the community.

In the year 1952, Mr. John Terborg came upon the idea of an asparagus cart on which those cutting or picking the crop would ride instead of walking as had been done up to this time. Mr. Terborg tried his idea on his farm. Following is a letter written by Mr. John Terborg to the American Vegetable Grower magazine and published in their April, 1954 edition.

"Dear Editor: The modern, streamlined asparagus picker in your December issue is a great improvement over the original machine, a picture of which is enclosed. It may be of general interest to know that this idea of "of an easier and better way to snap asparagus" was born on a hot June morning in our asparagus patch.

As my wife, three children, and myself were groaning along the rows, I mentioned to my wife that if I could just sit down and have someone pull me along the rows, it would just suit me fine. She politely informed me to stop my nonsense and get to work. One of our boys, too, thought we should be able to ride on this job.

The idea gained momentum, and the next day the contraption shown here, made of two steel wheels, a length of pipe for an axle, some 2x4's etc., was ready.

When we pulled into the field, alongside a public road, I was secretly hoping that there would not be any traffic going by. Before we reached the other end of the field, however, we were all convinced it worked, and the occasional jests from friends going by did not worry us.

We used this outfit with good results, saving more than half on our usual time. Later on others became interested, including the local blacksmith who contributed to the improved modern machine which we now use. Last year, we put a roof on ours so we could sit in the shade and to keep us dry when it rains.

Our joy in being instrumental in easing people's backs was rewarding. A friend of ours commented on our idea as follows: 'You know, John, when the large manufacturers want to find an easier way to do things, they pick out a few of the laziest men to figure it out.' "

Many people have appreciated the idea of Mr. Terborg over the past twenty years, as these carts are still widely used today. Much asparagus is still grown in the DeMotte area, although not in the quantity that it was in the 1940's and 1950's.



Another crop which has grown in popularity since it's inception, a little later than the asparagus, has been cultivated blueberries. The first blueberry bushes were planted by Mr. John Sauer on a farm southeast of DeMotte when he moved here from Cedar Lake, Ind. in 1943. He brought with him six plants which were the beginning of the large blueberry fields that we see around DeMotte today.

Mr. Sauer received information on the type of soil needed and caring procedure for blueberries from the Hartman Plantation in Michigan. He later started root cuttings in peat moss in propagation boxes, in order to have more plants to expand his fields. Mr. Sauer became a licensed nurseryman in the state of Indiana, which enabled him to also sell plants, so that many others got their start from those original six plants.

Mr. Sauer retired in 1956, at which time he sold the farm to Ernest Eenigenberg. At the time of the sale of the farm, it boasted eight acres of blueberries. Since that time, Mr. Eenigenburg has expanded his blueberry acreage and many others have planted acres of blueberry bushes. Some of these include Mr. John Evers, Mr. Carl Fritts, and Mr. Sam J. Kingma.

The soil in the DeMotte area has proven to be the type that blueberries need to produce a good crop, both in quality and quantity. At the onset of the blueberry growing, all berries had to be picked by hand. However, within the last few years, there have been developed berry pickers that shake the bush, thereby causing the ripe berries to fall off. This saves many hours of picking in the hot sun.

The growing of blueberries has drawn many people to DeMotte in July and August of each year to pick this delicious fruit. A blueberry field can look just like a festival on one of these prime days in harvest season, with cars and people all over.



Propagation Box



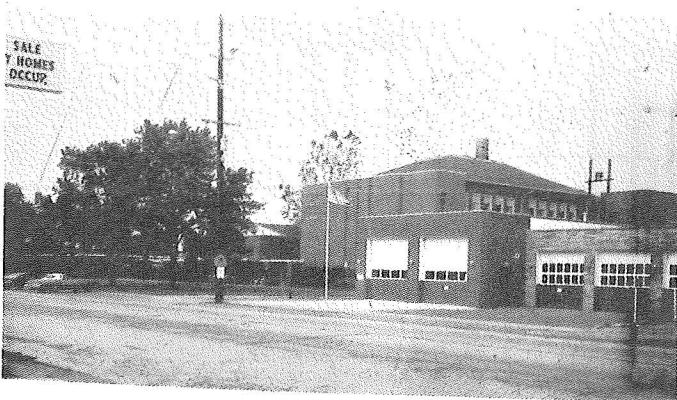
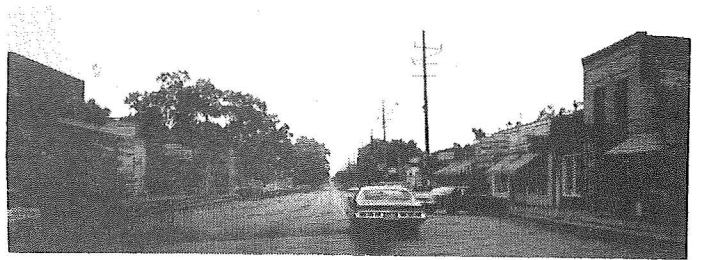
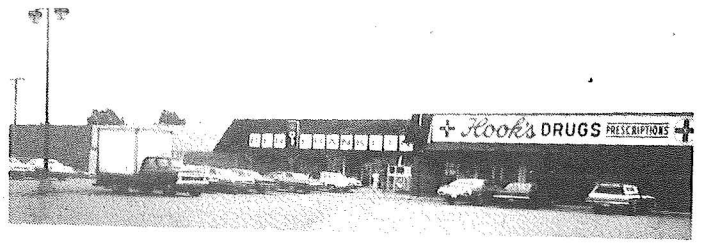
1949 - John Sauer in his blueberry field.

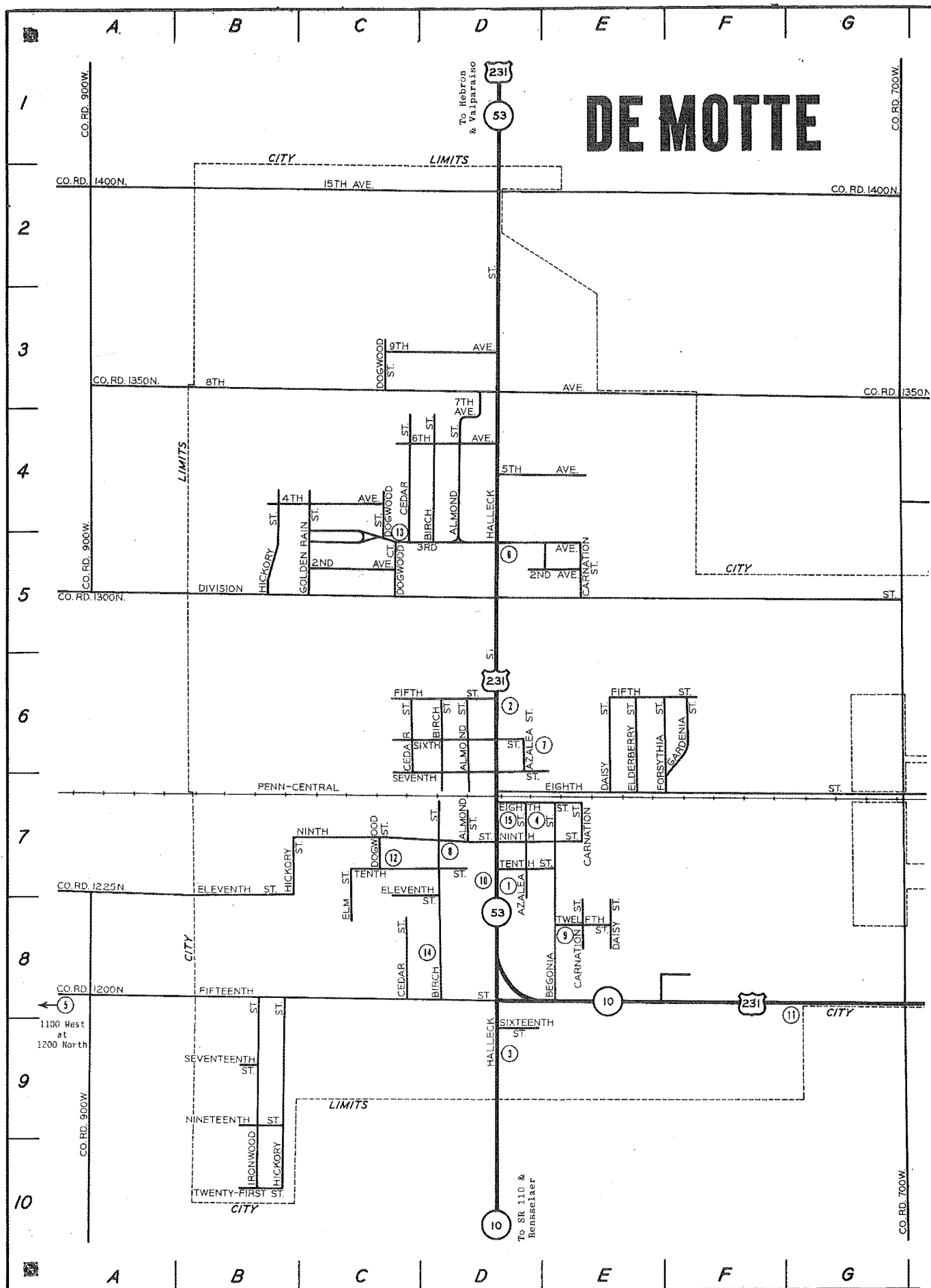
SUMMARY

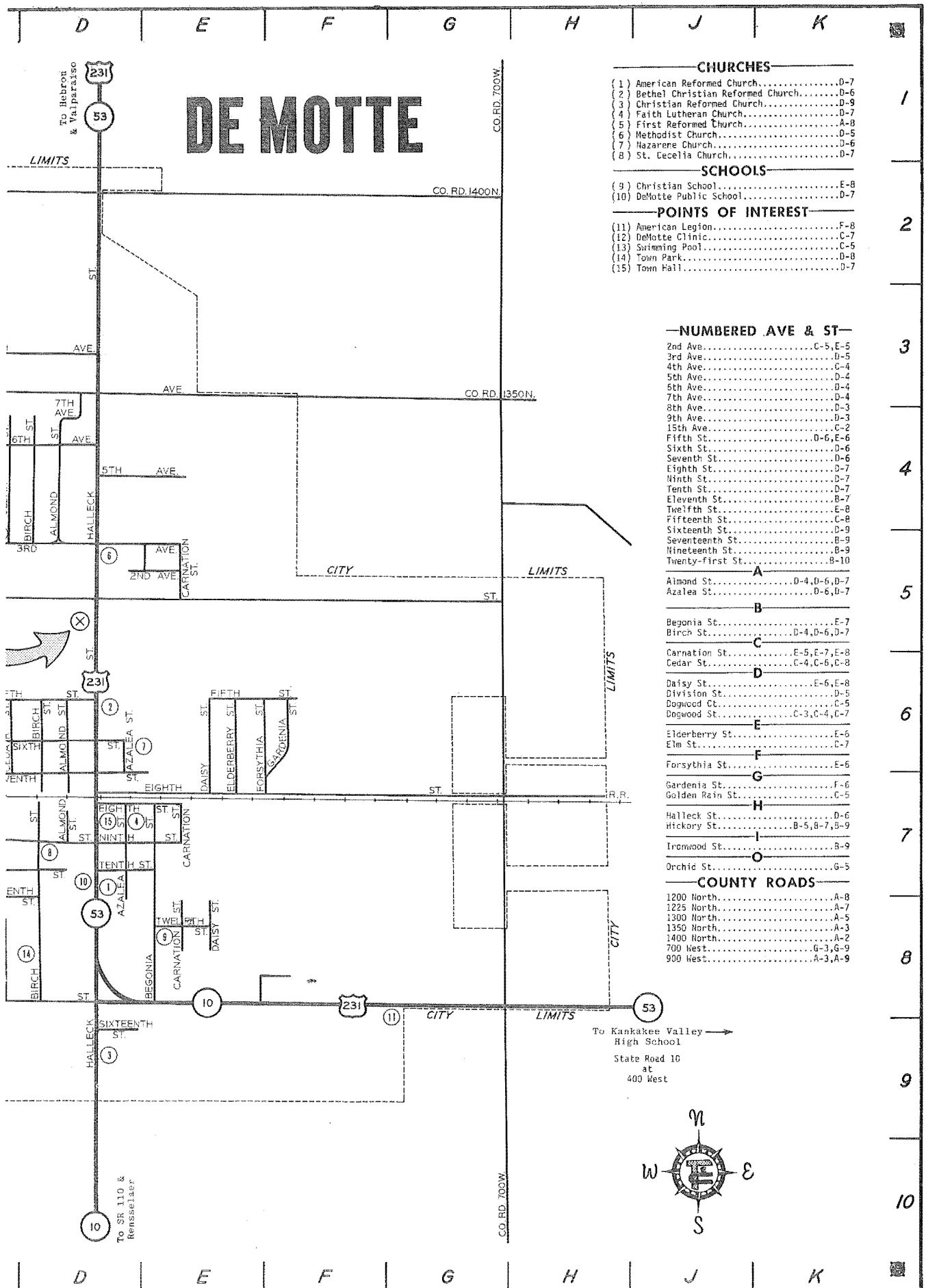
We, who have worked to compile this brief history of the town of DeMotte, realize that this is in no way the complete and exhaustive facts of events that have taken place throughout the one hundred years of developement of this community. We only hope that the facts presented here will be interesting to the reader and that we may, through this presentation, encourage and arouse some pride in DeMotte and the accomplishments of its people throughout these 100 years.

We hope that we may inform some of those who have forgotten or who are new to DeMotte of how this community developed. We feel that DeMotte is a wonderful place to live, to work, to play, and to worship. We feel that the people are great, and hope that each one who reads this book can experience that same warm feeling.

DEMOTTE 1976







DE MOTTE

CHURCHES

- (1) American Reformed Church.....D-7
- (2) Bethel Christian Reformed Church.....D-6
- (3) Christian Reformed Church.....D-9
- (4) Faith Lutheran Church.....D-7
- (5) First Reformed Church.....A-8
- (6) Methodist Church.....D-5
- (7) Nazarene Church.....D-6
- (8) St. Cecelia Church.....D-7

SCHOOLS

- (9) Christian School.....E-8
- (10) DeMotte Public School.....D-7

POINTS OF INTEREST

- (11) American Legion.....F-8
- (12) DeMotte Clinic.....C-7
- (13) Swimming Pool.....C-5
- (14) Town Park.....D-8
- (15) Town Hall.....D-7

NUMBERED AVE & ST

- 2nd Ave.....C-5,E-5
- 3rd Ave.....D-5
- 4th Ave.....C-4
- 5th Ave.....D-4
- 6th Ave.....D-4
- 7th Ave.....D-4
- 8th Ave.....D-3
- 9th Ave.....D-3
- 10th Ave.....C-2
- 11th Ave.....D-6,E-6
- 12th Ave.....D-6
- 13th Ave.....D-7
- 14th Ave.....D-7
- 15th Ave.....D-7
- 16th Ave.....D-7
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- 97th Ave.....D-7
- 98th Ave.....D-7
- 99th Ave.....D-7
- 100th Ave.....D-7

- Almond St.....D-4,D-6,D-7
- Azalea St.....D-6,D-7

- Begonia St.....E-7
- Birch St.....D-4,D-6,D-7

- Carnation St.....E-5,E-7,E-8
- Cedar St.....C-4,C-6,C-8

- Daisy St.....E-6,E-8
- Division St.....D-5
- Dogwood Ct.....C-5
- Dogwood St.....C-3,C-4,C-7

- Elderberry St.....E-6
- Elm St.....C-7

- Forsythia St.....E-6
- Gardenia St.....F-6
- Golden Rain St.....C-5

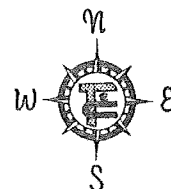
- Halleck St.....D-6
- Hickory St.....B-5,B-7,B-9

- Ironwood St.....B-9
- Orchid St.....G-5

COUNTY ROADS

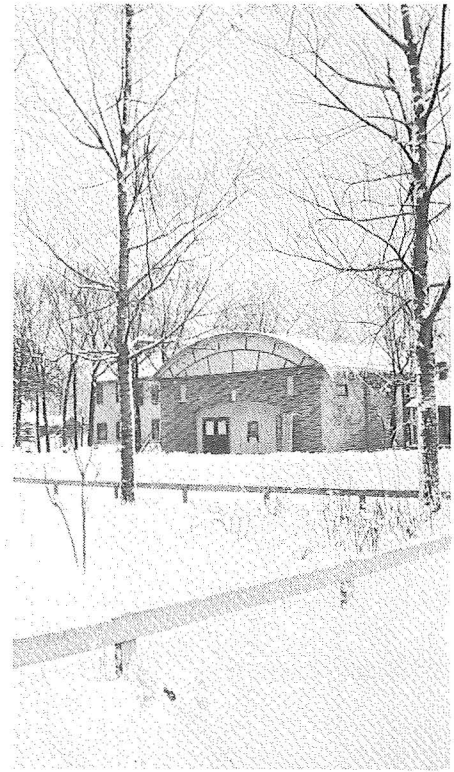
- 1200 North.....A-8
- 1225 North.....A-7
- 1300 North.....A-5
- 1350 North.....A-3
- 1400 North.....A-2
- 700 West.....G-3,G-9
- 900 West.....A-3,A-9

To Kankakee Valley
High School
State Road 10
at
400 West





Methodist Church — About 1923



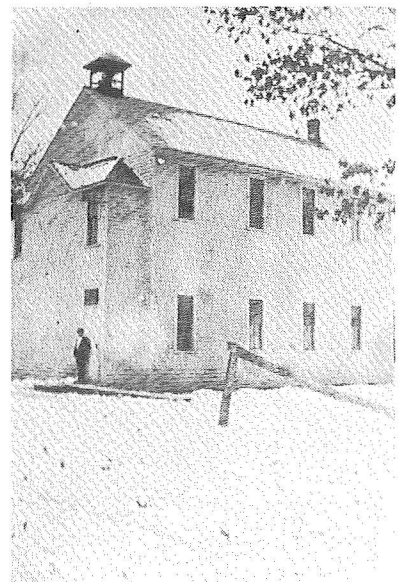
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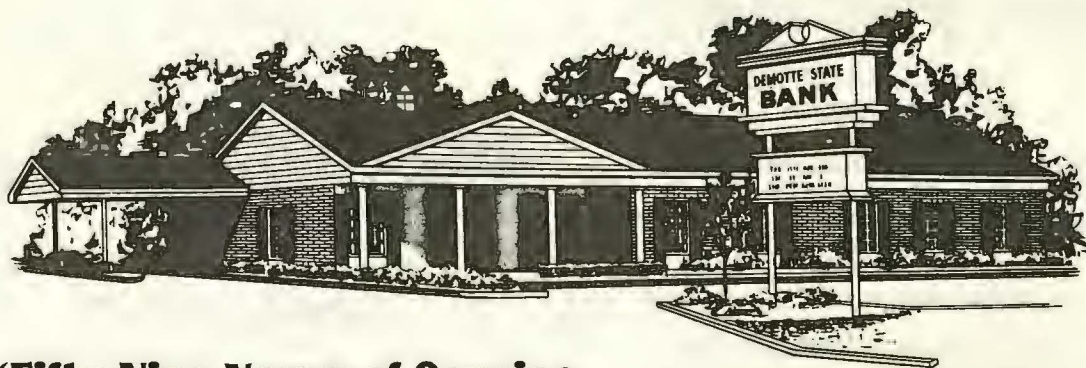
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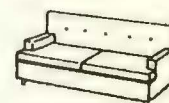
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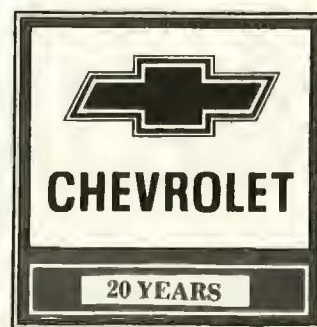
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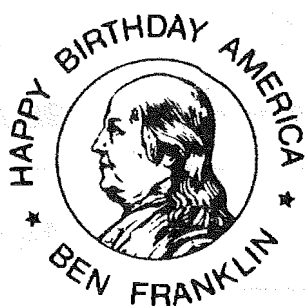
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